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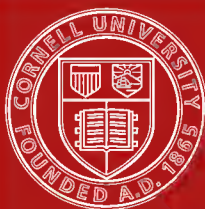
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ARISTOTLE :

A CHAPTER FROM THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE.

Including Analyses of Aristotle's Scientific Writings.

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Goethe. Aet. 79

THE

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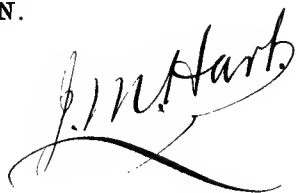
GEORGE HENRY LEWES.

Goethe's heart, which few knew, was as great as his intellect, which all knew.

JUNG STILLING.

SECOND EDITION.

PARTLY REWRITTEN.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. M. Hart', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the bottom of the signature.

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TO

THOMAS CARLYLE,

WHO FIRST TAUGHT ENGLAND TO APPRECIATE GOETHE,

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED,

As a Memorial

OF ESTEEM FOR RARE AND NOBLE QUALITIES.

PREFACE.

THERE was, perhaps, some temerity in attempting a *Life of Goethe* at a time when no German author had undertaken the task; but the reception which my work has met with, even after the appearance of the biographies by Viehoff and Schäfer, is a justification of the temerity. The sale of thirteen thousand copies in England and Germany, and the sympathy generously expressed, not unmingled, it is true, with adverse and even angry criticism, are assurances that my labours were not wholly misdirected, however far they may have fallen short of their aim. For the expressions of sympathy, public and private, I cannot but be grateful; and I have done my best to profit by criticism even when it was most hostile.

I wish to make special mention of the assistance tendered me by the late Mr. Franz Demmler. Although a stranger to me, this accomplished student of Goethe kindly volunteered, amid many and pressing avocations, to re-read my book with the express purpose of annotating it; and he sent me several sheets of notes and objections, all displaying the vigour of his mind and the variety of his reading. Some of these I was glad to use; and even those which I could not

agree with or adopt, were always carefully considered. On certain points our opinions were diametrically opposed ; but it was always an advantage to me to read criticisms so frank and acute.

The present edition is altered in form and in substance. It has been rewritten in parts, with a view not only of introducing all the new material which several important publications have furnished, but also of correcting and reconstructing it so as to make it more worthy of public favour. As there is little probability of any subsequent publication bringing to light fresh material of importance, I hope that this reconstruction of my book will be final.

With respect to the use I have made of the materials at hand, especially of Goethe's Autobiography, I can but repeat what was said in the Preface to the First Edition: the *Dichtung und Wahrheit* not only wants the egotistic garb and detail which give such confessions their value, but presents great difficulties to a biographer. The main reason of this is the abiding inaccuracy of *tone*, which, far more misleading than the many inaccuracies of *fact*, gives to the whole youthful period, as narrated by him, an aspect so directly contrary to what is given by contemporary evidence, especially his own letters, that an attempt to reconcile the contradiction is futile. If any one doubts this, and persists in his doubts after reading the first volume of this work, let him take up Goethe's Letters to the Countess von Stolberg, or the recently published letters to Kestner and Charlotte, and compare their tone with the tone of the Autobiography, wherein the old man depicts the youth as the old man saw him, not as the youth felt and lived. The picture of youthful follies and youthful passions comes softened through the distant avenues of years. The tur-

bulence of a youth of genius is not indeed quite forgotten, but it is hinted with stately reserve. Jupiter serenely throned upon Olympus forgets that he was once a rebel with the Titans.

When we come to know the real facts, we see that the Autobiography does not so much misstate as understate ; we, who can "read between the lines," perceive that it errs more from want of sharpness of relief and precision of detail than from positive misrepresentation. Controlled by contemporary evidence, it furnishes one great source for the story of the early years ; and I greatly regret there is not more contemporary evidence to furnish more details.

For the later period, besides the mass of printed testimony in shape of Letters, Memoirs, Reminiscences, etc., I have endeavoured to get at the truth by consulting those who lived under the same roof with him, those who lived in friendly intercourse with him, and those who have made his life and works a special study. I have sought to acquire and to reproduce a definite image of the living man, and not simply of the man as he appeared in all the reticences of print. For this purpose I have controlled and completed the testimonies of print by means of papers which have never seen the light, and papers which in all probability never will see the light—by means of personal corroboration, and the many slight details which are gathered from far and wide when one is alive to every scrap of authentic information and can see its significance ; and thus comparing testimony with testimony, completing what was learned yesterday by something learned to-day, not unfrequently helped to one passage by details furnished from half a dozen quarters, I have formed the conclusions which appear in this work. In this difficult, and sometimes delicate task, I hope it will be apparent that I have been

guided by the desire to get at the truth, having no cause to serve, no partisanship to mislead me, no personal connexion to trammel my judgment. It will be seen that I neither deny, nor attempt to slur over, points which may tell against my hero. The man is too great and too good to forfeit our love, because on some points he may incur blame.

Considerable space has been allotted to analyses and criticisms of Goethe's works ; just as in the life of a great Captain, much space is necessarily occupied by his campaigns. By these analyses I have tried to be of service to the student of German literature, as well as to those who do not read German ; and throughout it will be seen that pains have not been spared to make the reader feel at home in this foreign land.

The scientific writings have been treated with what proportionately may seem great length ; and this, partly because science filled a large portion of Goethe's life ; partly, because, even in Germany, there was nothing like a full exposition of his aims and achievements in this direction.

The Priory, North Bank, Regent's Park.

November 1863.

CONTENTS.

Book the First.—1749 to 1765.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE.

Character and extent of Goethe's claim to greatness.—His Ancestry.—Genealogical tables.—Goethe's father and mother.—What he derived from them . . . 1

CHAPTER II.

THE PRECOCIOUS CHILD.

Birth of Goethe.—Character of the epoch.—Position of Frankfurt.—Moderate elevation of Goethe's social status.—Anecdotes.—Maternal tuition.—His love for his sister Cornelia.—His love of story-telling.—Grandmother and grandfather Textor.—Early compositions in Latin and German.—Character of Goethe's precocity.—His school life 11

CHAPTER III.

EARLY EXPERIENCES.

Character not formed by circumstances.—Early religious doubts awakened by the Lisbon earthquake.—Early symbolical representation of the soul's aspirations to the Deity.—The Seven Years' War.—Invention of little stories.—Occupation of Frankfurt by the French.—The French theatre.—Duel with Derones.—His first play 20

CHAPTER IV.

VARIOUS STUDIES.

Departure of the French, and resumption of study.—The Polyglott romance.—Biblical studies.—Influence of Fräulein von Klettenberg.—Early love for Gretchen.—Disappointment.—Fascination exercised by Goethe 28

CHAPTER V.

THE CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN.

Characteristics of the man to be traced in the moral lineaments of the child.—Characteristics of Goethe.—His many-sidedness.—His seriousness, formality, and rationality.—His impatient susceptibility 34

Book the Second.—1765 to 1771.

CHAPTER I.

THE LEIPSIK STUDENT.

Goethe commences his collegiate life at Leipsic.—Wearies of logic and jurisprudence.—Appearance in society.—Acquaintance with Frau Böhme.—Literary society at the table d'hôte of Herr Schönkopf.—Falls in love with Anna Katharina Schönkopf.—Description of Goethe in Horn's letters to Moors.—Composition of "Die Laune des Verliebten".—Works of Goethe an embodiment of his experiences.—Pranks and extravagances with Behrisch.—Composition of "The Fellow Sinners" 37

CHAPTER II.

MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Subjective and objective intellects.—Antagonism between the ideal and the real.—Objective character of Goethe's genius.—Concrete tendency in his works.—Comparison of Goethe with Shakspeare.—Moral toleration 51

CHAPTER III.

ART STUDIES.

Goethe neglects his collegiate studies.—His love songs.—Joins Oeser's drawing class.—Trip to Dresden.—Learns engraving.—Serious illness.—State of religious doubt.—Returns to Frankfurt 55

CHAPTER IV.

RETURN HOME.

His reception at home.—Letters to Kätchen Schönkopf.—Marriage of Kätchen with Dr. Kanne.—Unpleasant relations with his father.—Studies in alchemy.—Religion more prominently in his thoughts 59

CHAPTER V.

STRASBURG.

Goes to Strasburg university.—Description of his person.—Strasburg cathedral.—Various studies.—Disgust at the "Système de la Nature".—Raphael's cartoons.—Ominous pictures exhibited to Marie Antoinette.—Mystical and metaphysical studies.—Early tendency towards nature-worship.—Giordano Bruno.—Notes on Bayle's criticism.—Remarkable comment on a chapter in Fabricius.—Society at Strasburg.—Improvement in his demeanour.—Increased circle of friends.—First meeting and friendship with Stilling.—Friendship with Franz Lerse.—Conquers his irritability and sensitiveness.—Two love poems.—Dancing at Strasburg.—Story of Emilia and Lucinda the dancing-master's daughters 65

CHAPTER VI.

HERDER AND FREDERIKA.

Goethe's German culture.—Acquaintance with Herder.—His opinion of Goethe.—His influence.—Strange introduction of Goethe to the Brion family.—Frederika.—Goethe's letter.—Affection of Goethe and Frederika.—Goethe obtains his doctor's degree.—Frederika's visit to Strasburg.—Effect of Shakspeare on Germany.—Goethe's oration on Shakspeare.—His tractate on German architecture.—Parting with Frederika 79

Book the Third.—1771 to 1775.

CHAPTER I.

DR. GOETHE'S RETURN.

Reception by his father.—Commencement of the Storm and Stress period.—Goethe's reluctance to appear in print.—His anguish at having renounced Frederika.—Reasons why he did not marry her.—Hard work.—Johann Heinrich Merck.—The Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen.—Goethe's fondness for skating 96

CHAPTER II.

GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN.

Three versions of "Götz".—Goethe's own account of the composition.—Character of Gottfried with the Iron Hand.—"Götz" a dramatic chronicle, not a drama.—Unlike Shakspeare in construction, in the presentation of character, and in the language.—Its injurious influence on dramatic art.—Its originality denied by Hegel 105

CHAPTER III.

WETZLAR.

Wetzlar.—The Imperial Court of Justice, a German chancery.—The Teutsche Haus.—The Round Table and its knights.—Description of Goethe by Kestner.—His acquaintance with Gotter.—Connexion with the Göttingen School.—Moral contest between individuals and Government.—Literary and philosophic insurrection.—Goethe falls in love with Charlotte Buff.—Kestner's engagement to Charlotte.—Jerusalem's unhappy passion.—Goethe's visit to Höpfner.—Melancholy departure from Wetzlar 112

CHAPTER IV.

PREPARATIONS FOR WERTHER.

Goethe interrogates fate whether he should become an artist.—Maximiliane von Laroche.—"Pater Brey" and "Satyros".—Studies at Frankfurt.—Re-writing "Götz von Berlichingen".—Publication of "Götz".—Misrepresentation of Herder's reception of the work.—Amusing offer of a bookseller.—Unrest and extravagancies of the age.—General want of faith.—Letters to Kestner and Charlotte.—Coquetting with suicide.—Suicide of Jerusalem.—Its effect on Goethe.—State of his mind.—Marriage of Charlotte to Kestner.—Marriage of Cornelia.—Goethe meditates a drama on Mahomet.—Marriage of Maximiliane Laroche with Brentano.—Dangerous intimacy.—Publication of "Götter, Helden, and Wieland".—First acquaintance with Karl August.—Composition of Werther 127

CHAPTER V.

WERTHER.

Kestner's narrative of Jerusalem's suicide.—Sensation at Wetzlar.—Character of Werther.—Distinction between Werther and Goethe.—Wretched English translation of "Werther".—Simplicity of the structure of the book.—Its prodigious effect.—Objections of Lessing.—Parody by Nicolai.—Nicolai at Werther's grave.—Enthusiasm of Zimmermann and Kotzebue.—Indignation of Kestner and Charlotte.—Goethe obtains their forgiveness.—Kestner's letter to Henning 145

CHAPTER VI.

THE LITERARY LION.

Marriage Lotteries.—Antoinette Gerock.—“Mémoire” of Beaumarchais.—Story of Beaumarchais and Clavijo.—Goethe’s composition of “Clavijo”.—Character of the play.—Merck’s reproach.—Goethe’s acquaintance with Klopstock and Lavater.—Character of Lavater.—Sentimentalism of the epoch.—Probable parentage of Goethe’s religious opinions.—Faith and knowledge.—Acquaintance with Basedow, the educational reformer.—Wild and genius-like demeanour.—Acquaintance with Jacobi.—Impressions produced by his wonderful personality.—Studies Spinoza.—Studies the history and doctrines of the Moravians.—Conceives the idea of treating epically the history of the “Wandering Jew”.—Projects a play on the fable of Prometheus.—Comparison of the extant fragment with the Prometheus of Æschylus and Shelley 160

CHAPTER VII.

LILI.

Love for Anna Elizabeth Schönemann (Lili).—Character of Lili.—Goethe’s verses to Lili—“Erwin und Elmire”.—Objections to the marriage.—Composition of “Stella”.—Canning’s caricature of the work.—Tour in Switzerland with the two Counts Stolberg.—Separation from Lili.—“Lili’s Menagerie”.—Commencement of “Egmont”.—Goethe accepts Karl August’s invitation to Weimar 180

Book the Fourth.—1775 to 1779.

CHAPTER I.

WEIMAR IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Description of Weimar.—The Würtburg.—Banqueting-hall of the Minnesingers.—Annual meeting of the Bachs.—The Park.—Legend of the serpent of Weimar.—Charming environs.—Social condition of the period.—State of science.—Absence of comfort and luxury.—Rough and simple manners.—Condition of the people.—Prices.—Influence of the Court.—No real public for Art at Weimar.—Necessity in Art for the co-operation of the nation with individual genius 189

CHAPTER II.

THE NOTABILITIES OF WEIMAR.

The Dowager Duchess Amalia.—Mdle. Göchhausen.—Wieland.—Einsiedel.—Corona Schröter.—Bertuch.—Musæus.—Seckendorf.—The Duchess Luise.—Karl August.—Gräfin Werther.—Frau von Stein.—Knebel.—Herder 203

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST WILD WEEKS AT WEIMAR.

Sensation created by Goethe at Weimar.—Laxity of German morals based on sentimentalism.—Goethe’s flirtations.—Skating; dissipation leading to weariness.—His close intimacy with Karl August.—Raised to the post of Geheime Legations Rath.—Protest of the officials silenced by the duke.—Exaggerated scandal.—Klopstock’s letter of remonstrance.—Breach between Klopstock and Goethe.—Gleim’s anecdote of Goethe.—Absurdity of the charge that Goethe sacrificed his genius to the Court.—Merck’s approbation of Goethe’s position 211

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRAU VON STEIN.

- Charlotte, Baroness von Stein.—Goethe falls in love with her.—Extracts from letters.—The Gartenhaus in the Park dedicated to her.—The duke takes it from Bertuch, and transfers it to Goethe.—Royal visits.—Love of Nature.—Ballad of the Fisherman 223

CHAPTER V.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

- Goethe's influence with the Duke, and efforts to improve Weimar.—Popularity of private theatricals.—Open air performances.—Representation of "Minerva's Birth, Life, and Deeds".—Goethe's operetta "Die Fischerin".—Miscellaneous performances.—Representation of the "Iphigenia".—Goethe's acting.—Various employments of time 230

CHAPTER VI.

MANY COLOURED THREADS.

- Love and ambition.—Death of his sister.—Adopts a poor boy.—Letters from sentimental youths.—Composition of "Triumph der Empfindsamkeit".—Journey to the Harz mountains in disguise.—Interview with Plessing, the misanthrope.—Suicide of Fräulein von Lassberg.—Goethe's increased hatred of Wertherism.—Representation of the "Triumph der Empfindsamkeit" 238

CHAPTER VII.

THE REAL PHILANTHROPIST.

- His manifold employments and studies.—His love of the people.—Visit to Berlin.—Frederic the Great.—Goethe's kindness.—His delicate benevolence to Kraft.—His letters to Kraft.—Refutation of the opinion that Goethe was cold and heartless 245

 Book the Fifth.—1779 to 1793.

CHAPTER I.

NEW BIRTH.

- Passage of Youth to Manhood.—Composition of the "Iphigenia" in prose.—The prose mania 258

CHAPTER II.

IPHIGENIA.

- Mistaken notion that the Iphigenia is a specimen of the Greek tragedy.—Necessary calmness of evolution in the Greek drama confounded with calmness of life.—Deep passions called into play by the Greek dramatists.—Profound difference between Goethe and Euripides.—"Iphigenia" not a Greek but a German play. Not a drama, but a dramatic poem.—Parallel between the Iphigenia of Goethe and the Iphigenia of Euripides 262

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS.

- Goethe active in his official duties.—Raised to the rank of Geheimrath.—Journey with Karl August to Frankfurt and Strasburg.—Interview with Frederika.—

Interview with Lili.—Journey to Switzerland.—Schiller first sees Goethe.—Return to Weimar.—Changes in his mode of life.—Passionate study of science.—Tendency to believe in the unity of nature.—Slow advance to a more serious and decisive plan of existence.—Raised to nobility.—Increased devotion to the Frau von Stein.—Occasional discords with Karl August.—Feels authorship to be the true mission of his life 274

CHAPTER IV.

PREPARATIONS FOR ITALY.

Birth of a crown-prince.—Goethe's poem of "Ilmenau".—Increased official burdens.—Journey in the Harz with Fritz von Stein.—Prepares the "Planet Dance".—Pronounces an oration on the re-opening of the Ilmenau mines.—Discovers an intermaxillary bone in man.—Biographical significance of the discovery.—Studies in natural history.—Changes in Weimar society.—Increase of Salary.—His generosity.—Separation of opinion between Goethe and Jacobi.—Goethe disgusted with the hypocritical nature of Lavater.—Strong impulse to visit Italy.—His secret departure 283

CHAPTER V.

ITALY.

Goethe in Italy under an assumed name.—The "Italiänische Reise".—His delight in the present, and not in the past.—His residence in Venice and Rome.—Passion for art.—Tries to discover the secret of vegetable forms.—Weimar grumbling.—His visit to Naples.—Sir William and Lady Hamilton.—Vesuvius, Pæstum, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Capua.—Palermo.—Visits the parents of Cagliostro.—Return to Rome.—Literary labours.—Effect of his residence in Italy.—Result of his study of art.—Falls in love with a young Milanese.—Returns to Weimar 292

CHAPTER VI.

EGMONT AND TASSO.

"Egmont" a universal favourite, but not a masterpiece.—A novel in dialogue, not a drama.—The character of Egmont a type of humanity.—Materials and construction of the play.—Analysis of "Egmont".—"Tasso" 301

CHAPTER VII.

RETURN HOME.

Melancholy return from Italy to Weimar.—Letter to Karl August.—Relieved from the more onerous duties of office.—Coolness towards the Frau von Stein.—Schiller's account of his first interview with Goethe.—Wide gulf between the two.—Difference in their fortunes 309

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIANE VULPIUS.

Her first meeting with Goethe.—Her position, education, and character.—Her connection with Goethe.—Composition of the "Roman Elegies".—How far a poet is justified in disregarding the conventional proprieties of his age.—Goethe's love for Christiane.—Disapprobation of Weimar society.—Rupture with the Frau von Stein.—Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein.—Her letter describing his illness 316

CHAPTER IX.

THE POET AS A MAN OF SCIENCE.

Studies.—Goethe's authority accepted in art, but rejected in science.—Real nature of authority, and claims of amateurs.—His treatise on the "Me-

tamorphoses of Plants."—Its cold reception.—Before its age.—Recognition of his labours by St. Hilaire.—Modern recognition of his discovery.—High character of his botanical and anatomical studies.—Unfortunate studies in optics.—Misunderstanding of Newton's theory.—Publication of the "Beiträge zur Optik".—Opposition to it.—Goethe's obstinacy and irritability.—His "Theory of Colours" expounded and contrasted with that of Newton.—Goethe's explanation of the phenomena of refraction.—Source of his errors.—Misconception of Method.—Efforts to supply the place of experiment and mathematics by observation and reason.—Native direction of his mind towards the concrete phenomena, not towards abstractions.—His success in the organic sciences.—Not a metaphysician, but a thinker on the *à priori* method.—Review of his discovery of the intermaxillary bone.—Claims of Vicq d'Azyr.—Employment of the comparative method.—The doctrine of morphology.—The vertebral theory, and theory of Metamorphosis.—Goethe's creation of a type.—Claims of Linnæus and Wolff.—Goethe's hypothesis of elaborated sap opposed to Wolff's hypothesis of deficient sap.—Law of vegetation and law of reproduction clearly seen by Goethe.—Goethe's efforts to create the science of philosophic anatomy.—The positive method.—Principle of development grasped and applied by Goethe.—Law of division of labour in the animal organism clearly expressed in his formula.—His "Introduction to Comparative Anatomy".—Vertebral theory of the skull criticised.—Examination of Goethe's claim to the discovery of the vertebral theory of the skull 326

CHAPTER X.

THE CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE.

Goethe's second visit to Italy.—The Venetian Epigrams.—Return to Weimar.—Friday evenings.—"Der Gross Kophtha".—Invasion of France for the restoration of Louis XVI.—Goethe accompanies the army.—Utter want of interest in politics.—Opposed to the principles of the Revolution, but without sympathy for the Royalists.—His diary of the "Campaign of France".—Return to Weimar.—His house in the Frauenplan.—The study, the library, and the bedroom.—Friendship with Meyer.—The "Bürger-general".—The "Aufge-regten".—"Reinecke Fuchs" 365

Book the Sixth.—1794 to 1805.

CHAPTER I.

GOETHE AND SCHILLER.

Friendship of Goethe and Schiller.—Their profound dissimilarity.—Personal appearance of both.—Points of resemblance between them.—Their mutual earnestness in art.—Similarity in the phases of their development.—Goethe restored to poetry by Schiller.—Goethe's admiration for his rivals.—His praise of Schiller.—Shakspeare's silence about his rivals.—Indifference of Weimar to the progress of the Revolution.—Contemporary state of German literature.—"Die Horen" started by Schiller.—Rapid growth of the friendship between Goethe and Schiller.—Beneficial influence of Schiller on Goethe.—Goethe's scientific ardour and poetical plans.—Failure of the "Horen".—Publication of the "Xenien".—Sensation produced 381

CHAPTER II.

WILHELM MEISTER.

English, French, and German views on the camel.—German philosophical criticism.—Goethe's primary intention in "Wilhelm Meister".—Alterations in the plan.—Schiller's objection.—Its twofold purposes—dramatic and educational.—Characters in the novel.—Artistic atheism.—Supposed immorality of "Wilhelm Meister".—Its deep and healthy moral meaning.—The "Confessions of a Fair Saint".—Extract from Schiller's criticisms on "Wilhelm Meister" . . . 392

CHAPTER III.

THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL.

Influences of Goethe and Schiller on each other.—Evil effects of philosophy on German literature.—Character of the Romantic School in Germany.—Schlegel, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and Solger.—Shakspeare translated by Tieck and Schlegel.—Preference of the Romanticists for the legends and heroes of Catholicism.—General enthusiasm for Mysticism.—Art the handmaid of Religion.—Return of the painters to Roman Catholicism and the middle ages.—Theoretical discussions of Goethe and Schiller.—Goethe's literary labours.—Gives Schiller a plan of "William Tell".—Walter Scott . . . 402

CHAPTER IV.

HERMANN UND DOROTHEA.

Foundation of "Hermann and Dorothea".—Character of the poem.—Truthful descriptions of country life and country people.—Objective delineation of the scenes.—Pure human existence represented in the subject matter.—Clearness and significance of the style.—Subtleties of German æsthetical criticism . . . 408

CHAPTER V.

THE THEATRICAL MANAGER.

Court character of the Weimar stage.—National cooperation indispensable to dramatic art.—Error of Goethe and Schiller in appealing only to the cultivated few.—Necessity of the combination of amusement with instruction in the drama.—Failure of Goethe's experiments on the Weimar stage, arising from his contempt of public opinion.—The Jena students.—Despotic efforts of Goethe to control public criticism.—Managerial despotism over the actors.—Reverence of the actors for Goethe.—Difficulties in the management.—Effect of the connexion of Goethe and Schiller.—Representation of "Wallenstein".—Devrient's critical observations on the Weimar school.—Difficulties of rhythm and pronunciation.—Art preferred to nature.—Rehabilitation of the French tragedy.—Delusive efforts to found a German drama by poetic works and antique restorations.—Goethe no dramatist.—His version of "Romeo and Juliet".—Character of Shakspeare's play.—The injurious alterations by Goethe.—Declining interest of Goethe in the theatre after Schiller's death.—Refusal to admit performing dogs on the stage.—Offensively dismissed by Karl August.—The Duke's regret . . . 419

CHAPTER VI.

SCHILLER'S LAST YEARS.

Goethe's mode of daily life.—His reception of visitors.—Bürger and Heine.—Jean Paul Richter's description of Goethe and Schiller.—Friendship of Goethe and Schiller, and partizanship of their respective admirers.—Kotzebue's unsuccessful efforts to create a coolness between Goethe and Schiller.—Herder's jealousy of Schiller.—The "Natürliche Tochter".—Madame de Stael's visit to Weimar.—Illness of Goethe and Schiller.—Schiller's death . . . 435

CHAPTER VII.

FAUST.

Gradual development of "Faust", and progress of its composition.—The problem of our intellectual existence, and picture of our social existence.—Resemblance between "Faust" and "Hamlet".—Twofold cause of the popularity of "Faust".—The "idea of 'Faust'" not so important a study as the "means" which produce the effect.—Analysis of the First Part of "Faust".—The Theatre Prologue.—The Prologue in Heaven.—Necessity for the two Prologues.—First scene of Faust in his study.—The scene before the gate.—Faust's study.—Auerbach's cellar.—The witches' kitchen.—Meeting with Margaret—Wood and cavern.—The "Walpurgis Nacht".—Causes of the early disappointment and after fascination of the readers of "Faust."—Inadequacy of all translations of poetry.—Analysis of Marlowe's "Faustus" and Calderon's "El Magico Prodigioso".—Description of Maler Müller's play.—Coleridge's criticisms on Goethe's "Faust" compared with Goethe's own observations.—In "Faust", the problem stated but not solved 446

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LYRICAL POEMS.

Goethe's fame lessened by his wealth.—Perfection of his poetry and occasional feebleness of his prose.—Witchery of his lyrics.—Sincerity of their style.—Simplicity and directness of the images.—Story of the "Bride of Corinth".—"Gott und die Bajadere".—The "Erl King" 480

Book the Seventh.—1805 to 1832.

CHAPTER I.

THE BATTLE OF JENA.

Effect of Schiller's death on Goethe.—Visit of Jacobi.—Acquaintance with Gall.—Appreciation of Phrenology.—Battle of Jena.—Sacking of Weimar.—French soldiers in Goethe's house.—Courage of the Duchess Luise.—Napoleon's intemperate rage against Karl August.—Characteristic outburst of Goethe 485

CHAPTER II.

GOETHE'S WIFE.

Goethe's wife 490

CHAPTER III.

BETTINA AND NAPOLEON.

Restoration of peace at Weimar.—Visit of Bettina.—Her character.—True nature of her intercourse with Goethe.—Forbidden Goethe's house.—Unauthenticity of the "Correspondence" proved by Riemer.—Napoleon at Erfurt.—His reception of Karl August, Goethe, and Wieland.—Conversations of Napoleon with Goethe.—Goethe flattered by Napoleon's attentions.—Beethoven's ostentatious independence, and Goethe's supposed servility 495

CHAPTER IV.

ELECTIVE AFFINITIES.

Goethe's passion for Minna Herzlieb.—“Die Walverwandtschaften”.—Plot and character of the novel.—General criticisms.—Marriage of Minna.—Death of Goethe's mother 504

CHAPTER V.

POLITICS AND RELIGION.

Goethe's acquaintance with Beethoven.—Death of Wieland.—Struggle of Germany against Napoleon—Goethe's indifference in politics, but earnestness in art.—Accused of looking on life only as an artist.—Accused of irreligion.—Changes in his religious opinions.—Opposition to dogmatic teachings.—Theosophy and ethics.—His religion.—His system of morals.—Character of his old age.—His oriental studies.—The Westöstliche Divan.—Ovation at Frankfurt 511

CHAPTER VI.

THE ACTIVITY OF AGE.

Publication of the “Kunst und Alterthum”.—His growing tendency towards mysticism.—Visit of Werther's Charlotte.—Death of his wife, Christiane.—Marriage of his son with Ottilie von Pogwisch.—Anecdote of the enlargement of the Jena library.—Quarrel with the Landtag concerning the accounts of the commission for art and science.—Charged with stealing an ingot of gold.—Story of Döbereiner and the bar of platinum.—Story of the hundred engravings borrowed from Knebel.—Miscellaneous literary labours.—“Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre”.—Character of the work.—Eckermann's account of its extension.—Opposition to it in Germany.—Spread of Goethe's fame in Italy, England, and France.—Vitality of his old age.—His passion for Fräulein von Lewezow.—Celebration of his jubilee at Weimar.—Protection of his copyright throughout Germany.—Death of Karl August.—Effect on Goethe 525

CHAPTER VII.

SECOND PART OF FAUST.

Embarrassment in expressing a faithful opinion.—Comparison of the impression produced by “Faust” and the “Second Part”.—Character of the “Second Part”.—Symbolism in art must be intrinsically beautiful and interesting, as well as significant.—The “Second Part of Faust” a failure.—Analysis and criticism 541

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CLOSING SCENES.

Goethe in his eighty-first year.—Revolution of July, and contest between Cuvier and St. Hilaire.—Death of Goethe's only son.—Tribute to Goethe from fifteen Englishmen.—Thackeray's residence at Weimar, and interview with Goethe.—Goethe's activity in his old age.—Signs of decay.—Death 550

BOOK THE FIRST.

1749 to 1765.

Vom Vater hab' ich die Statur,
Des Lebens ernstes Führen ;
Von Mütterchen die Frohnatur,
Die Lust zu fabuliren.

Hätte Gott mich anders gewollt,
So hätt' er mich anders gebaut.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE.

QUINTUS CURTIUS tells us that, in certain seasons, Bactria was darkened by whirlwinds of dust, which completely covered and concealed the roads. Left thus without their usual landmarks, the wanderers awaited the rising of the stars,—

“To light them on their dim and perilous way”.

May we not say the same of Literature? From time to time its pathways are so obscured beneath the rubbish of the age, that many a footsore pilgrim seeks in vain the hidden route. In such times let us imitate the Bactrians : let us cease to look upon the confusions of the day, and turning our gaze upon the great Immortals who have gone before, seek guidance from their light. In all ages the biographies of great men have been fruitful in lessons. In all ages they have been powerful stimulants to a noble ambition. In all ages they have been regarded as armouries wherein are gathered the weapons with which great battles have been won.

There may be some among my readers who will dispute Goethe's claim to greatness. They will admit that he was a great poet, but deny that he was a great man. In denying it, they will set forth the qualities which constitute their ideal of greatness, and finding him deficient in some of these qualities, will dispute his claim. But in awarding him that title, I do not mean to imply that he was an ideal man ; I do not present him as the exemplar of all greatness.

No man can be such an exemplar. Humanity reveals itself in fragments. One man is the exponent of one kind of excellence, another of another. Achilles wins the victory, and Homer immortalises it: we bestow the laurel crown on both. In virtue of a genius such as modern times have only seen equalled once or twice, Goethe deserves the epithet of great; unless we believe a great genius can belong to a small nature. Nor is it in virtue of genius alone that he deserves the title. Merck said of him that what he lived was more beautiful than what he wrote; and his Life, amid all its weaknesses and all its errors, presents a picture of a certain grandeur of soul, which cannot be contemplated unmoved. I shall make no attempt to conceal his faults. Let them be dealt with as harshly as severest justice may dictate, they will not eclipse the central light which shines throughout his life. But although I neither wish to excuse, nor to conceal faults which he assuredly had, we must always bear in mind that the faults of a celebrated man are apt to carry an undue emphasis. They are thrown into stronger relief by the very splendour of his fame. Had Goethe never written *Faust* no one would have heard that he was an inconstant lover, or a tepid politician. His glory immortalises his shame.

Let us begin as near the beginning as may be desirable, by glancing at his ancestry. That he had inherited his organization and tendencies from his forefathers, and could call nothing in himself original, he has told us in these verses:

“ Vom Vater hab' ich die Statur,
 Des Lebens ernstes Führen;
 Von Mütterchen die Frohnatur,
 Die Lust zu fabuliren.
 Urahn herr war der Schönsten hold,
 Das spukt so hin und wieder;
 Urahn frau liebte Schmuck und Gold,
 Das zuckt wohl durch die Glieder.
 Sind nun die Elemente nicht,
 Aus dem Complex zu trennen,
 Was ist denn an dem ganzen Wicht
 Original zu nennen? ”*

* “From my father I inherit my frame, and the steady guidance of life; from dear little mother my happy disposition, and love of story-telling. My ancestor was a ‘ladies’ man,’ and that habit haunts me now and then; my ancestress loved finery and show, which also runs in the blood. If, then, the elements are not to be separated from the whole, what can one call original in the descendant?”

This is a very inadequate translation; but believing that to leave German untranslated is unfair to those whose want of leisure or inclination has prevented their acquiring the language, I shall throughout translate every word cited. At the same time it is unfair to the poet, and to the writer quoting the poet, to be forced to give translations which are after all felt *not* to represent the force and spirit of the original. I will do my best to give *approximative* translations, which the reader will be good enough to accept as such, rather than be left in the dark.

The first glimpse we get of his ancestry carries us back to about the middle of the seventeenth century. In the Grafschaft of Mansfeld, in Thuringia, the little town of Artern numbered among its scanty inhabitants a farrier, by name Hans Christian Goethe. His son, Frederick, being probably of a more meditative turn, selected a more meditative employment than that of shoeing horses: he became a tailor. Having passed an apprenticeship (not precisely that of *Wilhelm Meister*), he commenced his Wanderings, in the course of which he reached Frankfurt. Here he soon found employment, and being, as we learn, "a ladies' man," he soon also found a wife. The master tailor, Sebastian Lutz, gave him his daughter, on his admission to the citizenship of Frankfurt and to the guild of tailors. This was in 1687. Several children were born, and vanished; in 1700 his wife, too, vanished, to be replaced, five years afterwards, by Frau Cornelia Schellhorn, the daughter of another tailor, Georg Walter; she was then a widow, blooming with six-and-thirty summers, and possessing the solid attractions of a good property, namely, the hotel *Zum Weidenhof* where her new husband laid down the scissors, and donned the landlord's apron. He had two sons by her, and died in 1730, aged seventy-three.

Of these two sons, the younger, Johann Caspar, was the father of our poet. Thus we see that Goethe, like Schiller, sprang from the people. He makes no mention of the lucky tailor, nor of the Thuringian farrier, in his autobiography. This silence may be variously interpreted. At first, I imagined it was aristocratic prudery on the part of *von Goethe*, minister and nobleman; but it is never well to put ungenerous constructions, when others, equally plausible and more honorable, are ready; let us rather follow the advice of Arthur Helps, to "employ our *imagination* in the service of charity." We can easily imagine that Goethe was silent about the tailor, because, in truth, having never known him, there was none of that affectionate remembrance which encircles the objects of early life, to make this grandfather figure in the autobiography beside the grandfather Textor, who was known and loved. Probably, also, the tailor was seldom talked of in the parental circle. There is a peculiar and indelible ridicule attached to the idea of a tailor in Germany, which often prevents people of much humbler pretensions than Goethe, from whispering their connexion with such a trade. Goethe does mention this grandfather in the Second Book of his *Autobiography*, and tells us how he was teased by the taunts of boys respecting his humble parentage; these taunts even went so far as to imply that he might possibly have had several grandfathers; and he began to

speculate on the possibility of some latent aristocracy in his descent. This made him examine with some curiosity the portraits of noblemen, to try and detect a likeness.

Johann Caspar Goethe received a good education, travelled into Italy, became an imperial councillor in Frankfurt, and married, in 1748, Katharina Elizabeth, daughter of Johann Wolfgang Textor, the chief magistrate (*Schultheiss*).*

The genealogical tables of kings and conquerors are thought of interest, and why should not the genealogy of our poet be equally interesting to us? In the belief that it will be so, I here subjoin it.

* The family of Textor and Weber exist to this day, and under both names, in the Hohenlohe territory. Karl Julius Weber, the humorous author of "Democritus" and of the "Briefe eines in Deutschland reisenden Deutschen," was a member of it. In the description of the *Jubiläum* of the Nürnberg University of Altorf, in 1723, mention is made of one Joannes Guolfgangus Textor as a bygone ornament of the faculty of law; and Mr. Demmler, to whom I am indebted for these particulars, suggests the probability of this being the same John Wolfgang, who died as Oberbürgermeister in Frankfort, 1701.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE GOETHE FAMILY.

FRIEDRICH GEORG GOETHE, from 1687 a citizen and tailor in Frankfort-on-the-Maine; born Sept. 7, 1657, at Artern, in the county of Mansfeld, where his father was a farmer; (died 1700); secondly, Mrs. CORNELIA SCHELHORN (born Sept. 27, 1668; married first, ANNA ELISABETH LUTZ, a tailor's daughter (died 1700); buried Feb. 13, 1730. buried March 28, 1754); died as keeper of the inn *zum Weidenhof* at Frankfort; buried Feb. 13, 1730.

JOHANN MICHAEL GOETHE, died 1733. JOHANN CASPAR GOETHE, born July 31, 1710; died 27 May, 1782, as Imperial Counsellor in Frankfort; married Aug. 20, 1748, KATHARINA ELIZABETH TEXTOR. (born Feb. 19, 1731; died Sept. 13, 1806).

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, born Aug. 28, 1749; died March 22, 1832; from July 13, 1788, lived with CHRISTIANE VULPIUS (died June 6, 1816); married her, Oct. 19, 1806.

CORNELIE FRIEDRICA CHRISTIANE, born Dec. 7, 1750; died June 8, 1777, at Emmendingen; married Nov. 1, 1773, JOH. GE. SCHLOSSER (born 1739; died 1799, at Frankfort).

HERMANN JACOB, born Nov. 26, 1752; died Jan. 11, 1759.

KATHARINA ELIZABETH, born Sept. 8, 1754; died Jan. 19, 1756.

JOHANNA MARIA, born March 28, 1756; died Aug. 9, 1759.

GEORG ADOLF, born June 14, 1760; died Feb. 16, 1761.

JULIUS AUGUST WALTHER VON GOETHE, born Dec. 25, 1789, in Weimar; died as Privy Counsellor, Oct. 28, 1830, at Rome; married April 1817, OTTILIE VON POGWISCH.

MARIE ANNA LOUISE SCHLOSSER, born Oct. 28, 1774; died Sept. 28, 1811; married 1795, NICOLAVIUS, at Eutin (died 1839).

ELISABETH KATHARINA JULIE SCHLOSSER, born May 10, 1777, died July 5, at Emmendingen.

WALTHER WOLFGANG V. GOETHE, born Feb. 1818.

WOLFGANG MAX. V. GOETHE, born Sept. 18, 1820.

ALMA V. GOETHE, born Oct. 1827.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE TEXTOR FAMILY.

GEORG WEBER,
Citizen of Weickersheim, a small town in the Jaxt district, near Mergentheim.

WOLFGANG WEBER,

Counsellor at Hohenlohe, and Director of the Chancery at Neuenstein; according to the custom of the time, translated his family name WEBER into Latin, and called himself TEXTOR.

JOHANN WOLFGANG TEXTOR,

Born at Neuenstein; until 1690, Vice Court Judge and President-Vicar at the Electoral Court of Justice at Heidelberg; afterwards Consul and First Syndic at Frankfurt; died there Dec. 27, 1701.

CHRISTOPH HEINRICH TEXTOR, Counsellor of Justice and Advocate to the Elector Palatine; died 1716.

JOHANN NICOLAUS TEXTOR, Colonel and City Commandant; married 1737, a widow von BARKHAUSEN, born von KLETTENBERG.

JOHANN WOLFGANG TEXTOR, born Dec. 12, 1693; died Feb. 6, 1771, as Imperial Counsellor and Magistrate at Frankfurt; married ANNA MARGARETHA LINDHELMER, daughter of DR. CORNELIUS LINDHELMER, Procurator of the Imperial Chamber of Justice at Wetzlar (born July 31, 1711; died April 15, 1783).

KATHARINA ELISABETH, born Feb. 19, 1731; died Sept. 13, 1808; married Aug. 20, 1748, the father of the Poet, Counsellor

JOHANNA MARIA, born 1734; married Nov. 11, 1751, the druggist MER-
BER, in Frankfurt.

ANNA MARIA, born 1738; married Nov. 2, 1756, the clergyman M. STARR, in Frankfurt.

JOHANN JOST, born 1739; died Sept. 19, 1792, as Sheriff in Frankfurt.

ANNA CHRISTINA, born Oct. 24, 1743.

Goethe's father was a cold, stern, formal, somewhat pedantic, but truth-loving upright-minded man. He hungered for knowledge; and, although in general of a laconic turn, freely imparted all he learned. In his domestic circle his word was law. Not only imperious, but in some respects capricious, he was nevertheless greatly respected, if little loved, by wife, children, and friends. He is characterised by Krause as *ein geradliniger Frankfurter Reichsbürger*—"a formal Frankfurt citizen," whose habits were as measured as his gait.* From him the poet inherited the well-built frame, the erect carriage, and the measured movement which in old age became stiffness, and was construed as diplomacy or haughtiness; from him also came that orderliness and stoicism which have so much distressed those who cannot conceive genius otherwise than as vagabond in its habits. // The craving for knowledge, the delight in communicating it, the almost pedantic attention to details, which are noticeable in the poet, are all traceable in the father. //

// The mother was more like what we conceive as the proper parent for a poet. // She is one of the pleasantest figures in German literature, and one standing out with greater vividness than almost any other. Her simple, hearty, joyous, and affectionate nature endeared her to all. She was the delight of children, the favourite of poets and princes. To the last retaining her enthusiasm and simplicity, mingled with great shrewdness and knowledge of character, *Frau Aja*, as they christened her, was at once grave and hearty, dignified and simple. She had read most of the best German and Italian authors, had picked up considerable desultory information, and had that "mother wit" which so often in women and poets seems to render culture superfluous, their rapid intuitions anticipating the tardy conclusions of experience. Her letters are full of spirit: not always strictly grammatical; not irreproachable in orthography; but vigorous and vivacious. After a lengthened interview with her, an enthusiast exclaimed, "Now do I understand how Goethe has become the man he is!"† Wieland, Merck, Bürger, Madame de Stael, Karl August, and other great people sought her acquaintance. The Duchess Amalia corresponded with her as with an intimate friend; and her letters were welcomed eagerly at the Weimar Court. She was married at seventeen, to a man for whom she had no love, and was only

* Perhaps *geradliniger* might be translated as "an old square-toes," having reference to the antiquated cut of the old man's clothes. The fathers of the present generation dubbed the stiff coat of their grandfathers, with its square skirts and collars, by the name of *magister matheseos*, the name by which the Pythagorean proposition is known in Germany.

† *Ephemeriden der Literatur*, quoted in *Nicolovius über Goethe*.

eighteen when the poet was born.* This, instead of making her prematurely old, seems to have perpetuated her girlhood. "I and my Wolfgang," she said, "have always held fast to each other, because we were both young together." To him she transmitted her love of story-telling, her animal spirits, her love of everything which bore the stamp of distinctive individuality, and her love of seeing happy faces around her. "Order and quiet," she says in one of her charming letters to Freiherr von Stein, "are my principal characteristics. Hence I despatch at once whatever I have to do, the most disagreeable always first, and I gulp down the devil without looking at him. When all has returned to its proper state, then I defy any one to surpass me in good humour." Her heartiness and tolerance are the causes, she thinks, why every one likes her. "I am fond of people, and *that* every one feels directly—young and old. I pass without pretension through the world, and that gratifies men. I never *bemoralize* any one—*always seek out the good that is in them, and leave what is bad to him who made mankind, and knows how to round off the angles.* In this way I make myself happy and comfortable." Who does not recognise the son in those accents? The kindest of men inherited his loving happy nature from the heartiest of women.

He also inherited from her his dislike of unnecessary agitation and emotion: that deliberate avoidance of all things capable of disturbing his peace of mind, which has been construed as coldness. Her sunny nature shrank from storms. She stipulated with her servants that they were not to trouble her with afflicting news, except upon some positive necessity for the communication. In 1805, when her son was dangerously ill at Weimar, no one ventured to speak to her on the subject. Not until he had completely recovered did she voluntarily enter on it. "I knew it all," she remarked, "but said nothing. Now we can talk about him without my feeling a stab every time his name is mentioned."

In this voluntary insulation from disastrous intelligence, there is something so antagonistic to the notorious craving for excitement felt by the Teutonic races, something so unlike the morbid love of intellectual drams—the fierce alcohol of emotion with which we intoxicate ourselves, that it is no wonder if Goethe has on this account been accused of insensibility. Yet, in truth, a very superficial knowledge of his nature suffices to show that it was not from coldness he avoided indulgence in the "luxury of woe." It was excess of

* Lovers of parallels may be reminded that Napoleon's mother was only eighteen when the hero of Austerlitz was born.

sensibility, not want of sympathy. His delicate nature shrank from the wear and tear of excitement. That which to coarser natures would have been a stimulus, was to him a disturbance. It is doubtless the instinct of an emotional nature to seek such stimulants; but his reason was strong enough to keep this instinct under control. Falk relates that when Goethe heard he had looked upon Wieland in death, "and thereby procured myself a miserable evening, and worse night, he vehemently reproved me for it. Why, said he, should I suffer the delightful impression of the features of my friend to be obliterated by the sight of a disfigured mask? I carefully avoided seeing Schiller, Herder, or the Duchess Amalia, in the coffin. I, for my part, desire to retain in my memory a picture of my departed friends more full of soul than the mere mask can furnish me."

This subjection of the instinct of curiosity to the dictates of reason is not coldness. There is danger indeed of carrying it too far, and of *coddling* the mind; but into this extreme neither Goethe nor his mother can be said to have fallen. At any rate, let the reader pronounce what judgment he thinks fit, it is right that he should at the outset distinctly understand it to be a characteristic of the man. The self-mastery it implies forms the keystone of his character. In him the *emotive* was subjected to the *intellectual*. He was "king over himself." He, as he tells us, found men eager enough to lord it over others, while indifferent whether they could rule themselves—

"Das wollen alle Herren seyn,
Und keiner ist Herr von sich!"

He made it his study to subdue into harmonious unity the rebellious impulses which incessantly threatened the supremacy of reason. Here, on the threshold of his career, let attention be called to this cardinal characteristic: his footsteps were not guided by a light tremulous in every gust, liable to fall to the ground amid the hurrying agitation of vulgar instincts, but a torch grasped by an iron will, and lifted high above the currents of those lower gusts, shedding a continuous steady gleam across the troubled path. I do not say he never stumbled. At times the clamorous agitation of rebellious passions misled him as it misleads others, for he was very human, often erring; but viewing his life as it disposes itself into the broad masses necessary for a characteristic appreciation, I say that in him, more than in almost any other man of his time, naked vigour of resolution, moving in alliance with steady clear-

ness of intellect, produced a self-mastery of the very highest kind.*

This he owed partly to his father and partly to his mother. It was from the latter he derived those characteristics which determined the movement and orbit of his artistic nature: her joyous, healthy temperament, humour, fancy, and susceptibility, were, in him, creative, owing to the marvellous insight which gathered up the scattered and vanishing elements of experience into new and living combinations.

* "All I have had to do I have done in kingly fashion," he said: "I let tongues wag as they pleased. What I saw to be the right thing that I did."

CHAPTER II.

THE PRECOCIOUS CHILD.

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE was born on the 28th August, 1749, as the clock sounded the hour of noon, in the busy town of Frankfurt-on-the-Maine. The busy town, as may be supposed, was quite heedless of what was then passing in the corner of that low, heavy-beamed room in the *Grosse Hirsch Graben*, where an infant, black, and almost lifeless, was watched with agonizing anxiety—an anxiety dissolving into tears of joy, as the aged grandmother exclaimed to the pale mother: “*Räthin, er lebt!* he lives!” But if the town was heedless, not so were the stars, as astrologers will certify; the stars knew who was gasping for life beside his trembling mother, and in solemn convocation they prefigured his future greatness. Goethe, with a grave smile, notes this conjunction of the stars.

Whatever the stars may have betokened, this August 1749 was a momentous month to Germany, if only because it gave birth to the man whose influence on his nation has been greater than that of any man since Luther, not even excepting Lessing. A momentous month in very momentous times. It was the middle of the eighteenth century: a period when the movement which had culminated in Luther was passing from religion to politics, and freedom of thought was translating itself into liberty of action. From theology the movement had communicated itself to philosophy, morals, and politics. The agitation was still mainly in the higher classes, but it was gradually descending to the lower. A period of deep unrest: big with events which would expand the conceptions of all men, and bewilder some of the wisest.

It is not the biographer's province to write a history of an epoch while telling the story of a life; but some historical indication is necessary, in order that the time and place should be vividly before the reader's mind; and perhaps the readiest way to call up such a picture in a paragraph will be to mention some of the “notables” of that period, and at what points in their career they had arrived. In that very month of August Madame du Chatelet, the learned trans-

lator of Newton, the loving but pedantic *Uranis* of Voltaire, died in childbed, leaving him without a companion, and without a counsellor to prevent his going to the court of Frederick the Great. In that year Rousseau was seen in the brilliant circle of Madame d'Épinay, disputing with the Encyclopedists, declaiming eloquently on the sacredness of maternity, and going home to cast his newborn infant into the basket of the Foundling Hospital. In that year Samuel Johnson was toiling manfully over his English dictionary; Gibbon was at Westminster, trying with unsuccessful diligence to master the Greek and Latin rudiments; Goldsmith was delighting the Tony Lumpkins of his district, and the "wandering bear-leaders of genteel sort," with his talents, and enjoying that "careless idleness of fireside and easy chair," and that "tavern excitement of the game of cards, to which he looked back so wistfully from his first hard London struggles." In that year Buffon, whose *scientific* greatness Goethe was one of the first to perceive, produced the first volume of his *Histoire Naturelle*. Haller was at Göttingen performing those experiments on sensibility and irritability which were to immortalise him. John Hunter, who had recently left Scotland, joined Cheselden at the Chelsea Hospital. Mirabeau and Alfieri were tyrants in their nurseries; and Marat was an innocent boy of five years old, toddling about in the Val de Travers, unmolested as yet by the wickedness of "les aristocrats."

If these names have helped to call up the period, we must seek in Goethe's own pages for a picture of the place. He has painted the city of Frankfurt as one who loved it. No city in Germany was better fitted for the birthplace of this cosmopolitan poet. It was rich in speaking memorials of the past, remnants of old German life, lingering echoes of the voices which sounded through the middle ages: such as a town within a town, the fortress within a fortress, the walled cloisters, the various symbolical ceremonies still preserved from feudal times, and the Jews' quarter, so picturesque, so filthy, and so strikingly significant. // But if Frankfurt was thus representative of the past, it was equally representative of the present. // The travellers brought there by the Rhine-stream, and by the great northern roads, made it a representative of Europe, and an emporium of Commerce. It was thus a centre for that distinctively modern idea—Industrialism—which began, and must complete, the destruction of Feudalism. This two-fold character Frankfurt retains to the present day: the storks, perched upon its ancient gables, look down upon the varied bustle of Fairs held by modern Commerce in the ancient streets.

The feeling for antiquity, and especially for old German life, which his native city would thus picturesquely cultivate, was rivalled by a feeling for Italy and its splendours, which was cultivated under the paternal roof. His father had lived in Italy, and had retained an inextinguishable delight in all its beauties. His walls were hung with architectural drawings and views of Rome; and the poet was thus familiar from infancy with the Piazza del Popolo, St. Peter's, the Coliseum, and other centres of grand associations. Typical of his own nature and strivings is this conjunction of the Classic and the German—the one lying nearest to him, in homely intimacy, the other lying outside, as a mere *scene* he was to contemplate. Goethe by nature was more Greek than German, but he never freed himself from German influence.

Thus much on time and place, the two cardinal conditions of life. Before quitting such generalities for the details of biography, it may be well to call attention to one hitherto unnoticed, viz., the moderate elevation of his social status. Placed midway between the two perilous extremes of affluence and want, his whole career received a modifying impulse from this position. He never knew adversity. This alone must necessarily have deprived him of one powerful chord which vibrates through literature. Adversity, the sternest of teachers, had nothing to teach him. He never knew the gaunt companionship of Want, whispering terrible suggestions. He never knew the necessity to conquer for himself breathing-room in the world; and thus all the feelings of bitterness, opposition, and defiance, which accompany and perplex the struggle of life, were to him almost unknown; and he was taught nothing of the aggressive and practical energy which these feelings develop in impetuous natures. How much of his serenity, how much of his dislike to politics, may be traced to this origin?

That he was the loveliest baby ever seen, exciting admiration wherever nurse or mother carried him, and exhibiting, in swaddling clothes, the most wonderful intelligence, we need no biographer to tell us. Is it not said of every baby? But that he was in truth a wonderful child we have undeniable evidence, and of a kind less questionable than the statement of mothers and relatives. At three years old he could seldom be brought to play with little children, and only on the condition of their being pretty. One day, in a neighbour's house, he suddenly began to cry and exclaim, "That black child must go away! I can't bear him!" And he howled till he was carried home, where he was slowly pacified; the whole cause of his grief being the ugliness of the child.

